

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

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CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

MILITARY ADDRESSES TREAT AS NOFORN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, PFOR, SREF, CB, TH, US

SUBJECT: CAMBODIAN NAVAL HIJACKERS MUTINY AND FLEE TO THAILAND

BEGIN SUMMARY: THE CAMBODIAN PATROL BOAT WHICH SEIZED THE AMERICAN MERCHANT VESSEL MAYAGUEZ SAILED INTO SATTAHIP MAY 15. THE CREW TOLD THAI NAVY OFFICIALS THAT THEY HAD MUTINIED AGAINST THEIR KHMER ROUGE OFFICERS AND NOW SEEK ASYLUM AS POLITICAL REFUGEES. THE THAI, HOWEVER, HAVE NOW RETRACTED THE INFORMATION THAT THIS CRAFT HIJACKED THE MAYAGUEZ. THEY ARE STILL SENSITIVE ABOUT THE ENTIRE MAYAGUEZ AFFAIR AND PROBABLY HOPE TO KEEP INFORMATION ON THE PATROL BOAT'S EARLIER ACTIVITIES AS QUIET AS POSSIBLE. END SUMMARY.

1. APPROXIMATELY TEN FORMER KHMER NAVY (MNK) CREWMEN SAILED PATROL CRAFT E-311 INTO THAI WATERS MAY15. ACCORDING TO THAI OFFICIALS, THEY SAID THAT THEY MUTINIED AND THREWW OVERBOARD THEIR REMAINING KC OFFICER AND NOW SEEK POLITICAL ASYLUM. THEY EXPLAINED THEIR SHIP HAD SEIZED A NUMBER OF VESSELS OVER THE PAST SEVERAL WEEKS INCLUDING THE MAYAGUEZ. KC CREWMEMBERS FORMED SMALL PRIZE CREWS FOR THE CAPTURED

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VESSELS AND THE FORMER MNK CREW WAITED UNTIL KC RANKS

THINNED DOWN TO ONE OFFICER BEFORE MUTINYING.

2. THE THAI NAVY NOW CLAIMS THAT THE E-311 WAS NOT INVOLVED IN THE MAYAGUEZ' HIJACKING. THE THAI HAVE PAINTED OUT THE KHMER MARKINGS ON THE PATROL CRAFT AND PAINTED A THAI FLAG ON THE SUPERSTRUCTURE. THE SHIP IS ALSO FLYING A THAI FLAG. IN FACT, INFORMATION FROM THE MAYAGUEZ AT THE TIME THE KC SEIZED IT AND EXAMINATION OF THE MNK INVENTORY NOW IN KC HANDS CONFIRMS EARLIER THAI INFORMATION THAT THE E-311 WAS THE HIJACKER.

4. COMMENT: THIS PECULIAR TWIST ON THE MAYAGUEZ AFFAIR HAS PUT THE THAI ON THE SPOT. THE KHMER PATROL BOAT'S ARRIVAL IS ALREADY IN THE THAI PRESS. WHEN PRECISE WORD OF THE E-311'S ROLE IN THE MAYAGUEZ' HIJACKING GETS OUT, AS IT SURELY WILL, THE THAI GOVERNMENT WILL SUFFER MORE PUBLICITY AND A REVIVAL OF THIS SENSITIVE MATTER. THIS FEAR OF FURTHER PUBLICITY PARTLY EXPLAINS WHY THE THAI ARE TRYING TO HIDE THE PATROL BOAT'S ROLE. IN ADDITION THE THAI ARE PROBABLY HOPING TO FORESTALL BOTH KC AND US CLAIMS TO THE CRAFT BY CAUSING IT TO "DISAPPEAR" UNDER THAI COLORS.
WHITEHOUSE

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